

At-Home Guided Learning Plan *featuring the* Trees Study

Trees Study—Investigation 2: Who lives in trees?

Over the next several days, you and your child will investigate the question "Who lives in trees?" As you find the answer to this question together, your child will research and explore to learn more about the many creatures that rely on, interact with, and live in trees.

This plan includes hands-on activities in which your child will observe, research, and create to discover

- what animals and insects live in trees,
- what insects are harmful and helpful to trees, and
- what types of homes creatures make in trees.

Each day of the *Guided Learning Plan* includes the following:

Study Concepts
This study-related activity offers guidance for helping your family explore the topic, investigate questions about it, or celebrate your learning together through hands-on discovery. You'll also find a question here to help you effectively share your child's learning and discoveries with your teacher.

Guided Learning Experience
Here you'll find a suggested 10- to 15-minute activity that's more focused on supporting a specific skill—which is listed next to the title of the activity—in your child's development. You'll also find a question to help you effectively share your child's learning and discoveries with your teacher.

Mighty Minutes®
Use these short chants, games, and rhymes to playfully engage with your child at any time of day!

"Something to Consider" Tips
Reflect on positive guidance and developmental tips and strategies from experts in the field of early childhood.

The Creative Curriculum® *for* Preschool
by TeachingStrategies®

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Investigation 2: Day 1

Who lives in trees?

Who Might Live in Trees?

- Show your child a book or short, preschool-friendly video featuring animals that live in trees (e.g., monkeys, squirrels, sloths, woodpeckers).
- After the video or story, ask your child, *What animals live in trees?*
- List the animals your child remembered on a sheet of paper. Support your child to remember any animals he did not name: *I wrote "monkey" on the paper. What about the animal that pecked holes in the tree? That was a woodpecker. Can you say "woodpecker?"*

What animals did your child learn about?

Guided Learning Experience

Story Problems—*Understands quantities*

- Offer your child a collection of toys (e.g., cars, dolls, stuffed toys) to play with.
- As your child plays, think of several story problems he can solve using the toys. Invite him to count as a way to solve the problems. For example, you might say, *Beep! Beep! I noticed you are driving two cars, Gabriel. How many cars would you have if two more drove over? Let's count the cars together to find out, or Henry, you have four babies to feed and only two bottles. How many bottles do we need to feed all the babies?*
- Continue the activity for as long as it interests your child. Explain that he can think about story problems as he plays with different toys throughout the day.

How did you child understand and solve story problems using toys?

Mighty Minutes®

Strolling Through the Park—
Makes connections

1. Say and act out the following rhyme.

   We were strolling through the [park]
   one day,
   In the merry, merry month of May.
   We were taken by surprise,
   By a pair of ghoulish eyes…

2. Ask your child to name what might be looking at them and describe what it looks and sounds like.

3. Continue the rhyme with the following verse and repeat from the beginning with other ideas.

   We were so frightened; we ran home all the way. But the next day…



Something to Consider

While reading books about trees, ask questions and make comments that help your child connect the story to what they already know. For example, you might say, *I noticed that monkeys live in trees. I wonder what animals live in the trees where we live. What animals have you seen in trees?*

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Investigation 2: Day 2

Who lives in trees?

Finding Animal Clues

- Take your child outside for a walk to look for clues to what animals might live in or near a tree (e.g., a partially eaten leaf, a clump of twigs that looks like it came from a nest, a feather).
- When you find an item, describe it to your child and share the clue: *This leaf on this tree has some holes in it. That is a clue that something might be living in this tree. It's something that eats leaves!*
- Search for clues together and talk about what animals might have left them.: *Jamal, you found a feather. What animal do you think the feather came from? Yes, the feather came from a bird! Birds live in trees*.

Take photos of the clues you and your child found outside to share with his teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Show Me Five—*Understands quantities*

- Invite your child to explore a collection of objects, e.g., toothpicks, buttons, coins. Explain that he will make groups using the materials.
- Show him how to arrange objects into groups. As an example, take five objects from the group, arrange them in a line, and count them.
- Ask your child to create groups of up to five objects. Encourage him to point to the items as he counts and puts them into a group: *Peter, can you show me a group of three? Point to each toothpick as you count...one, two, three!*

How was your child able to group and count the items?

Mighty Minutes®

Riddle, Riddle, What is That?—
Recognizes and recalls

1. Choose several familiar toys or household items.
2. Create a riddle to describe each item, e.g., "I am green and brush your teeth."
3. Begin each riddle by saying, *Riddle, riddle, what is that?*
4. Ask your child to guess the item.
5. Take turns choosing and describing items.



Something to Consider

Bath time is the perfect opportunity to build on children's natural curiosity about their body parts. Build your child's vocabulary by asking them to wash under their chin, in between their toes, the crevice of their elbow, the backs of their knees, and under their fingernails.

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Investigation 2: Day 3

Who lives in trees?

Harmful and Helpful

- Using the Internet, show your child a photo of an aphid and a photo of a leaf damaged by an aphid. Talk about how aphids are *harmful* to trees. Say, *Aphids are harmful, which means they hurt the leaves on trees and other plants by chewing holes in them.*
- Show a photo of a ladybug. Explain why ladybugs are *helpful* to trees. Say, *Ladybugs are helpful to trees because they eat the aphids that eat holes in the leaves.*
- If your child is interested, take a walk outside to observe how insects interact with trees and plants.

Was your child interested in learning about insects? What did he say about them?

Guided Learning Experience

Rhyming Riddles—*Rhymes*

- Talk with your child about rhyming words. Explain that *rhyming words* sound alike at the end of the word. Offer some examples and invite your child to say some rhyming words they know.
- Explain that a *riddle* is a word puzzle, or word problem, that your child can figure out. Pose a riddle that prompts them to share a rhyming word. For example, say *I'm thinking of something you wear on your head that rhymes with* cat*,* or *For lunch we will be having a fruit that rhymes with "danana."*
- After your child has solved the riddles, invite them to share a riddle for you to guess. Play the game until your child is no longer interested.

Was your child able to answer the riddle with the given clues? How many words did they rhyme?

Mighty Minutes®

Let's Pretend—*Understands the physical properties of objects*

1. Ask your child to make their body look flat and small, like a balloon before it's been blown up.
2. Tell your child that you are going to pretend to inflate them.
3. Blow hard and ask your child to make their body bigger and wider like an inflated balloon each time you blow.
4. After your child is "inflated," pretend to be a gust of wind that carries them over trees, mountains, and places in your community.
5. Afterward, pretend to gently "pop" the balloon.



Something to Consider

Following your child's interests throughout a study can help him become more engaged and excited about the study topic. If your child shows interest in specific creatures that live in trees, try finding books or preschool-friendly videos on the Internet to help him learn more about them.

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Investigation 2: Day 4

Who lives in trees?

Pretending to be Trees

- Explain to your child that older trees are *sturdy* or very strong.
- Stand in front of your child with your feet firmly planted and your arms outstretched. Explain to your child that together you will pretend to be sturdy trees.
- Sway your upper body and arms as you sing the following to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

  I'm a sturdy oak tree, oak tree, oak tree.
  I'm a sturdy oak tree, swaying in the wind.

- Change the tempo by pretending to be a tree swaying on a windy day.

How did your child use her body to pretend to be a sturdy tree?

Guided Learning Experience

Describing Art—*Writes to convey meaning*

- After your child creates a work of art, encourage him to examine his artwork and describe it.
- You can ask questions, such as *I see you used lots of red. Can you tell me about your drawing?* or *In your drawing, I see someone walking on the sidewalk. Where is that person going? What will she do when she gets there?*
- Offer pencils or crayons for your child to write about his artwork or record his dictation on the bottom or back of the page.
- Accepting any marks your child makes encourages him to feel proud of his emerging writing skills!

How was your child able to write words to describe his art?

Mighty Minutes®

We Like Clapping—*Counts*

1. Invite your child to clap and chant or sing along to the tune of "Alouette."

   We like [clapping], you know that we like [clapping].
   We like [clapping], it's what we like to do.
   One, two, three, four, five, six, seven (echo).
   Eight, nine, ten (echo).
   Once again (echo).
   Oh, oh, oh, oh….

2. Sing the song together in different ways, e.g., faster/slower, louder/softer.



Something to Consider

Like any great artist, your child may want to revisit and revise her artwork over time. This a great sign that your child is truly engaged and immersed in the creative process! Find a place for your child to keep her work-in-progress safe and sound when she's not working on it—it might need to be up high where pets or younger siblings can't reach it!

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Investigation 2: Day 5

Who lives in trees?

Homes in Trees

- Talk with your child about the homes that insects and animals make in trees (e.g., nests, dens, hives, webs): *Do you remember when we saw the web in the tree outside? The web is a spider's home.*
- Create a list of homes that animals make in trees. Invite your child to choose a home from the list to make.
- Provide materials (e.g., paper, crayons, molding dough, sticks, leaves, string or yarn, scissors, glue) that your child can use to make her animal home: *Carma, you said that you want to make a bird's nest. What should we collect so you can make it? I think that the small sticks we found outside might work well, too!*

Take a photo of the animal home your child created to share with her teacher.

Guided Learning Experience

Investigating and Recording—*Writes to convey meaning*

- Invite your child to learn more about a topic that interests him. Ask your child what he is curious about or what he would like to learn about the topic.
- Invite him to use books or the Internet to research the topic and discover the answers to his questions.
- Encourage him to write or draw to record his research. Offer to record his dictations about his discoveries.

How did your child record his findings?

Mighty Minutes®

Where Can He Be?—*Understands direction, position, and location*

1. Say the following rhyme or sing to the tune of "Oh Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone?" using a familiar animal.

   Oh where, oh where has my [gray squirrel] gone?
   Oh where, oh where can [he] be?
   With [his two pointy ears] and [his big bushy tail],
   Oh where, oh where can he be?

2. Invite your child to describe where she thinks the animal might be, e.g., up the tree, behind the stump, or in the hollow log.



Something to Consider

Children may not know what to do when they feel strong emotions. It's a good idea to practice different calming strategies with your child so they can use those strategies when their feelings become overwhelming. You can try taking deep breaths together or closing your eyes and counting to 5. Ask, *Does your body feel calmer now?*

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